

LIGUORI CHRISTIAN INITIATION PROGRAM

Journey of Faith



FOR CHILDREN

INQUIRY LEADER GUIDE



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Welcome to *Journey of Faith*!

Liguori Publications is dedicated to providing parishes with quality resources like *Journey of Faith*. Since 1993, *Journey of Faith* has established itself as a trusted and beloved program for catechists to guide participants through the RCIA process. As the Catholic Church takes on the challenges and graces of each generation, *Journey of Faith* has been carefully developed to help you meet the changing needs of adults, teens, and children who are inquiring about and seeking initiation into the Catholic Church—ever ancient, ever new.

The *Journey of Faith* program is cohesive, comprehensive, and flexible. The forty-eight catechetical lessons and three corresponding *Leader Guides* create a practical and attractive formation process for today's team leaders, catechists, and participants. All the materials are referenced to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and have been granted an *imprimatur* from the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Unbaptized children over the age of seven are to be considered catechumens. Liguori offers *Journey of Faith for Children* to any child needing formation or sacraments. All *Journey of Faith for Children* products are available in Spanish under the title *Jornada de Fe para niños*.

We hope you enjoy using *Journey of Faith* and find it enlightening and engaging for all. To see our entire collection of sacramental preparation titles, parish subscriptions, formation and spirituality books, and more, please visit Liguori.org to contact us for a copy of the latest catalog.

—The editors

An Overview of the RCIA

The Historical Development

The decision to become a member of the early Christian community bore serious ramifications. Becoming Christian meant a break with one's background and often required fracturing relationships with the non-Christian members of one's family. In many cases, this decision meant a willingness to suffer persecution or even death, as seen in the example of the martyrs Perpetua and Felicity. Perpetua, a noblewoman of Carthage and mother of an infant son, and Felicity, a pregnant slave woman, both refused to denounce Christianity and were subsequently martyred during the public games in the amphitheater around the year 200.

Just as the decision to become a Christian was not made lightly, the formation process wasn't quick or easy. Catechumens—those in the process of preparing for baptism—were invited into a step-by-step journey of three or more years with the community before achieving full membership. During this process they were expected not only to begin to accept Christian beliefs but also to begin to live the Christian life. The community shared their faith with the catechumens and celebrated each step along with them.

One period of this preparation has remained throughout the centuries: the season of Lent. Originally this time was one of immediate preparation for baptism, which was celebrated at the Easter Vigil. During Lent, the entire Christian community, especially the catechumens, devoted themselves to prayer, fasting, and self-scrutiny. For those already baptized, it was a time to remember and renew their original commitment.

During the solemn Easter Vigil, the catechumens—now called the elect—received the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist) and were welcomed into the community. As a rule, this initiation was celebrated at the Easter Vigil only. Formation of the newly baptized did not end with the rites of Holy Saturday night, however, but continued with further instruction and the daily living out of Christian values.

This process began to change in the fourth century, when periodic persecution of Christians was replaced by tolerance. Because of the favor many emperors showed toward it, Christianity became fashionable,

and many people began entering the catechumenate for social and political reasons. As a result, the pattern and standards for formation gradually transitioned to the point where, by the fifth century, the rites of initiation were separated into the three sacraments we know and celebrate today. Infant baptism became the norm, and the catechumenate vanished.

The Church published the first *Roman Catechism* in 1566, following the Council of Trent. This book of teachings was presented in question-and-answer form and was used for instruction of the faithful. Such catechisms later became the foundation for what came to be called "convert classes." Using a teacher-student model, the priest would meet with interested parties and assist them in memorizing certain prayers and learning the material in the catechism. The duration of the process, the material to be covered, and the format were left to the priest or parish custom, with few outside directives given.

Successful completion of these classes meant either baptism or formal reception into the Catholic Church. This event was usually celebrated in a private ceremony, with only close family in attendance. Those received into the Church would be confirmed by the bishop at the cathedral or would receive the sacrament in their local parish whenever the bishop came to confirm the schoolchildren. Follow-up for the new Catholics, if any, might consist of being sent to a formal course in liturgy, Scripture, dogma, or morality.

Following World War II, a call for a change in the formation of new Catholics came from the Church in Africa. They began to use the ancient form of the catechumenate to provide stability in formation and a period of time for faith to mature. The Second Vatican Council called for a thorough revision of all the rites (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*], 4), and a committee that engaged in a formal study and revision of the methods leading to baptism or reception into the Catholic Church was formed. This study resulted in the promulgation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)* in 1972.

Thus the catechumenate was restored: a process of formation, sanctified by various liturgical rites that mark progress in the journey of faith and culminate in full membership in the Catholic Christian community. An integral part of the revision is that the whole process and its rites are to be celebrated with and in the context of the local parish community and diocese.

Q4: Who Is Jesus Christ?

Catechism: 514–682

Objectives

- Define Jesus as fully human and fully divine.
- Discover that Christ is the way to the Father and salvation.
- Develop participants' relationship with Jesus through personal sharing and reflection.

Leader Meditation

John 10:7–18

Jesus likens himself to a caring shepherd who would lay down his life for his sheep. Reflect on what these words tell us about the person Jesus.

Leader Preparation

- Read the lesson, this lesson plan, the Scripture passage, and the *Catechism* sections.
- Be familiar with the vocabulary terms for this lesson: Gospel, miracle. Definitions are given in the lesson and in this guide's glossary.
- Be prepared to model and review the steps to looking up Bible verses. There are many in this lesson. Determine ahead of time whether you can cover them all as a group, will divide them up for groups, or will leave some for participants to reflect on outside of the session.
- Ask your pastor for guidance on possible questions or concerns surrounding Jesus' life, identity, words, and dual natures. Perhaps he can help to lead the session or recommend ways to explain the material to the children.

Welcome

As the children arrive, welcome any new inquirers and sponsors. Check for supplies and immediate needs. Ask for any questions or comments about the last lesson that may have come up since then. Begin promptly.

Opening Scripture


John 10:7–18

Light the candle and read aloud. Emphasize the importance of Jesus' words, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me." Clarify for the children what it means to be Jesus' own. As Jesus' own, we belong to Jesus' "flock" or family, just like we belong to our families. That doesn't mean Jesus "owns" us, like we are his slaves. You will discuss free will and making good choices in later lessons, so now may be a good time to focus on the idea that we belong to Jesus' "flock."

As Lord, Christ is also head of the Church, which is his Body. Taken up to heaven and glorified after he had thus fully accomplished his mission, Christ dwells on earth in his Church.

CCC 669





Journey of Faith

Q4

INQUIRY


Who Is Jesus Christ?

Tomás was lost. He was supposed to be going to Terrence's house, but all the streets looked the same. Tomás knew he should probably turn around and go home, but he kept walking. Tomás knew he was way off track, but he didn't know how to get back on the right road.

"What are you doing way over here?" Terrence called when he saw Tomás.

Tomás felt relieved. "I'm lost. I didn't know where to go."

"That's OK. I'm walking my dog. If you walk back with us I can show you the way."



CHILDREN

CCC: 514–682

Who Is Jesus Christ?

Read the lesson anecdote as a class and ask the children if they can think of a difference between the kind of lost Tomás was and the kind of lost Jesus talks about.

Tomás was physically lost. He thought he was on the correct street, but he wasn't. Terrence had to show him the right way to go. Jesus talks about us being lost spiritually. This means we might be mixed up about what choices are right or good, how to treat people, or how to behave.

The Way

Ask the children how Jesus could be the way to God. Emphasize that Jesus is like our spiritual map. Through his life, he gives us directions on how to get to God.

Ask the children to think about how Jesus leads them to God. Encourage them to think of specific stories and share a story of your own as an example.

The Truth

As a group, make a list of ways we know Jesus is the truth.

Jesus never lies. Jesus always does the things he says he'll do. Jesus cares about us and wants the best for us. When we do what Jesus says, we grow closer to God. Jesus is really God and wants us to go to heaven and be with him.

The Life

Pause here to do the "Jesus Is..." activity as a group. Emphasize that we know Jesus is God through his words and his actions.

- How does light help you see?
How is Jesus like a light
(John 8:12)?

Light clears away shadows and the dark so we can find our way and see the things around us. Jesus lights up our lives by helping us to tell right from wrong and to see the people around us.

- What does a shepherd do?
How is Jesus like a shepherd
(John 10:14)?

A shepherd takes care of sheep and keeps them safe and healthy. Jesus takes care of us and helps keep us safe by giving us rules to follow and showing us how to live. Jesus watches over us and listens to us when we talk to him.

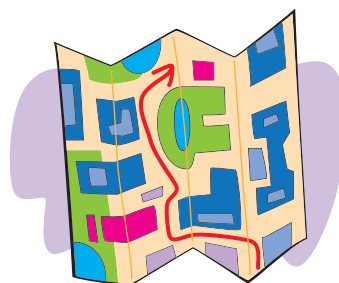
INQUIRY

JOURNEY OF FAITH

Who Is Jesus?

Jesus is the most important person in our journey toward God. Jesus Christ is the center of our faith. Without Jesus, we couldn't know God. Without Jesus, there would be no Church.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Let's look at those words carefully.

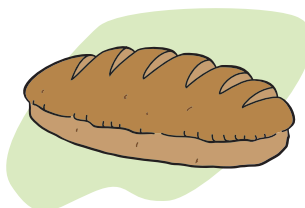


The Way

Jesus is the Way to God. When we know Jesus, we know God. What we learn from Jesus leads us closer to God.



How does Jesus lead you to God?



- How does a vine help the plant it's attached to? How is Jesus like a vine (John 15:1)?

A vine keeps a plant rooted to the ground, where it can get nourishment and survive storms. A plant without a vine would wither up or blow away in a bad storm. Jesus keeps us "rooted" to God, where we can get spiritual nourishment and grow strong in our faith.

The Truth

Jesus didn't say, "What I tell you is the truth," but "I am the truth." Jesus asks us to believe in him because he is God. When we believe in someone, we trust what they say is true, too. That's why we also believe what Jesus taught.



Do you believe that Jesus is really God?

The Life

Jesus taught us how to live by his example. Jesus would often go off alone and pray. This helped him understand and obey his Father. We also spend time in prayer and live by God's rules. Jesus brings us everlasting life. That good news fills our lives with joy and hope.



What in your life brings you joy or hope?

Jesus Is...

Jesus didn't only perform good deeds. He also said a lot of things about himself. Here are a few:

- "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). How does light help you see? How is Jesus like a light?
- "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14). What does a shepherd do? How is Jesus like a shepherd?
- "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower" (John 15:1). How does a vine help the plant it's attached to? How is Jesus like a vine?
- "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48). How does food give you life? How is Jesus like food?

- How does food give you life? How is Jesus like food (John 6:48)?

Food nourishes our bodies and helps us stay active and healthy. Jesus helps our souls to stay active and healthy. Jesus nourishes our bodies and souls in a special way through the Eucharist.

The Life of Jesus

We read about Jesus' life in the **Gospels** of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Jesus' birth was a miracle. God sent an angel named Gabriel to ask a girl named Mary if she was willing to be Jesus' mother. She was engaged to a man named Joseph. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and Mary and Joseph helped him to grow knowing and loving God.

Jesus did many good things. He taught people about God. He forgave people when they were sorry for the wrong things they'd done. He also healed people who were sick or injured. Some of the most exciting stories about Jesus describe the miracles he performed. A **miracle** is an event that doesn't have a scientific explanation. It seems impossible, but there's proof that it happened.

Not everyone liked what Jesus was doing or saying. So the religious leaders of the time plotted to have Jesus killed on a cross. Jesus knew what they were planning, but he let them plot anyway. Jesus died on a cross, but three days later, the greatest miracle of all happened. Jesus rose from the dead! He appeared to his friends so they would know he was alive. Anyone who believes in Jesus knows that he is real and lives forever.

INQUIRY

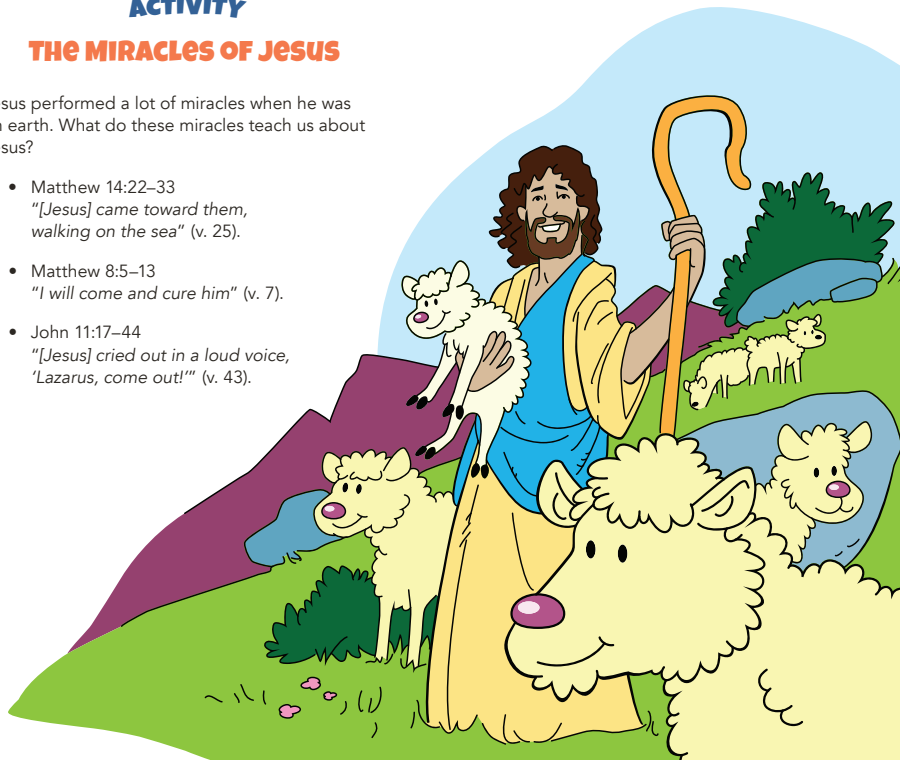
JOURNEY OF FAITH

ACTIVITY

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

Jesus performed a lot of miracles when he was on earth. What do these miracles teach us about Jesus?

- Matthew 14:22–33
"[Jesus] came toward them, walking on the sea" (v. 25).
- Matthew 8:5–13
"I will come and cure him" (v. 7).
- John 11:17–44
"[Jesus] cried out in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'" (v. 43).



The Life of Jesus

Remind the children that the four Gospels appear in the New Testament and that the Gospels were written to teach us about Jesus.

Ask the whole group if they have heard any stories about miracles. While their examples don't need to be Church-approved miracles, be sure they see the difference between a miracle that's really attributed to God and something

people say is a "miracle" because it's just unexpected (like, "it's a miracle you cleaned your room without being asked").

Complete "The Miracles of Jesus" activity as a group; answers appear to the right. Because this activity comes before the children have learned how to navigate the Bible, help them locate the passages and read them aloud. Reading from a children's Bible storybook may be preferable with younger children.

- Matthew 14:22–33

This miracle reveals Jesus' divine nature (that Jesus is God) and that because Jesus is God he can command nature.

- Matthew 8:5–13

This miracle reveals that Jesus would accept Gentiles (people who weren't Jewish) as his followers, too. It also reveals Jesus' ability to heal us.

- John 11:17–44

This miracle reveals that Jesus, as God, had authority over death, and could bring people back to life.

Final Activity

As you wrap up the lesson, give the children time to complete the final activity of the lesson, "You Know Me." Ask the children to share one fact they learned about Jesus with the rest of the group. Walk around and see what the children are writing. Affirm good answers and help clarify any confusion.



"You Know Me"

List five things you learned about Jesus today.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

In Short

- Jesus is fully human and fully divine.
- Christ is the way to the Father and salvation.
- Your friendship with Jesus grows through sharing and reflection.



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Closing Prayer

Teach the children to pray the memorial acclamation below by asking them to repeat each line after you. Explain that these statements summarize our faith and declare who Jesus is. These lines are so important, we say them together at every Mass.

*When we eat this Bread
and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.*

Take-Home

Ask the children and their parents or guardians to read John 1:1–18 together. Suggest splitting up the reading into one or two verses every night, depending on when your next session will be, so families have an opportunity to reflect together. Ask the children to please focus on how the passages talk about Jesus.